



GETTING THE GOODS ON LINE AND OFF: HOW TO RESEARCH WORK

FACILITATOR GUIDE

SESSION OVERVIEW

This 45 to 60 minute session will provide students with effective methods to research information about occupations prior to decision-making. Research activities include on-line investigation of occupations using the Alberta Learning Information Service web site.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to explain why research about work is important.
2. Students will identify sources of occupational information.
3. Students will be able to identify resources helpful for researching.

MATERIALS

Hand Out 1 – Getting The Goods On Line

Hand Out 2 – Networking and Informational Interviewing

Finding Out: How to Get the Information You Need to Make the Choices You Want, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry

Internet Access Required – alis.alberta.ca

OVERVIEW AND TIMELINES

Introduction – Research	5 Minutes
Brainstorming	15 Minutes
Internet Research	15 Minutes
Networking and Informational Interviewing	10 Minutes
Wrap Up – Review of Community Resources	5 Minutes



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ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION – RESEARCH

Information gathering, finding out, research – these terms all refer to the same process: figuring out what questions you need to ask regarding work, then finding the answers. Information gathering will help you to:

- Explore your options before you make a choice
- Discover new options
- Handle ongoing change in your life and career
- Make the best decisions in your life and career

The best decisions are informed decisions. When you gather information about your options, you're learning facts that will help to take the guesswork out of decision-making.

The more you know about all your options, the more likely you'll be able to choose those that are best for you.

Information gathering is a process that you can use every time you face a decision, from choosing a college program to selecting a day care.

This session can help you gather the information you need right now to make informed decisions about your career.

Adapted from Finding Out: How to Get the Information You Need to Make the Choices You Want, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry.

BRAINSTORMING

Break students into groups of three or four. Ask the group to brainstorm a list of all the information they would like to know about an occupation before deciding to pursue it.

It may be helpful to suggest a relatively unknown occupation and ask students what they would want to know about that occupation before accepting the job.



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Examples of little known occupations include:

- **Actuary** – uses mathematical information to calculate insurance, benefits programs and pensions
- **Scopist** – writes machine shorthand to capture word for word transcriptions that are interpreted by computers

Complete the list using the following Top Up List for Facilitators:

Top Up List For Facilitators		
Possible Information Regarding an Occupation		
<i>Rate of Pay</i>	<i>Working Conditions</i>	<i>Safety Programs</i>
<i>Required Training</i>	<i>Required Experience</i>	<i>Ongoing Training</i>
<i>Number of Coworkers</i>	<i>Required Safety Tickets</i>	<i>Indoors or Outdoors</i>
<i>Hours of Work</i>	<i>General Duties</i>	<i>Advancement</i>
<i>Future Growth Potential</i>	<i>Technological Changes</i>	<i>Future Trends Impact</i>
<i>Location</i>	<i>Mobility</i>	<i>Languages Needed</i>
<i>Full Time Offered</i>	<i>Benefits Available</i>	<i>Pension Available</i>
<i>Computer Competency</i>		

Debrief each group's responses.

Generate dialogue about whether this type of information might help students to make better decisions about work, for example:

- *If an occupation offered opportunities to live and work in other countries, would that impact upon your decisions?*
- *If you knew that an occupation required expensive ongoing training, how would that affect your decisions?*
- *Are safe working conditions important to you?*



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INTERNET RESEARCH

Have students move to Internet stations independently, or in groups as space allows. Instruct students to go to alis.alberta.ca or go to popular Alis Links:

- Occupational Profiles
- OCCinfo

Have students select OCCinfo (Alberta Occupational Profiles). Students will use the occupational title **search by title** on the left hand menu.

Assign some of the following obscure occupations, to either pairs or groups of students. Distribute **Getting the Goods On Line Hand Out**. Have students research their assigned occupation and complete the hand out.

Obscure Occupations

Acoustics Physicist	Call Taker	Carman
Conductor	Diplomat	Embalmer
Ergonomist	Gauger	Ichthyologist
Imam	Librettist	Mycologist
Roustabout	Skip Tracer	Volcanologist

At the end of each occupational profile, ALIS provides a list of several ***related occupations***. It is very important to ensure that students look at entire sectors of work, rather than a single occupation in order to better understand the industries, trends and occupational alternatives available.

Before students report their findings, if time permits, have the large group guess at the type of work each occupational title suggests. Have each group summarize and report their research as time permits. This can provide an effective connection into a discussion of the need to research in order to gain clear information about exciting, dynamic careers.

As time permits, inform students about the valuable services and links available through ALIS. In addition to information available in the CAREER section, ALIS offers LEARNING information such as post-secondary education, links to institutions, as well as loans and scholarship information. The EMPLOYMENT section of ALIS provides a full range of work search information, as well as links to local, national and international job boards.



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In addition to the Internet, have students quickly brainstorm other methods of research, noting responses on the board. Top up with facilitator's list.

Top Up List For Facilitators - Research Methods

<i>Daily Newspapers</i>	<i>Trade Shows</i>	<i>Career Counsellor</i>
<i>Conferences</i>	<i>Seminars</i>	<i>Career Fairs</i>
<i>Volunteering</i>	<i>Work Experience</i>	<i>Job Shadow</i>
<i>Guidance Counsellor</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Trends</i>

Internet – ALIS, www.careercruising.com, business web sites

Publications – trade, industry or association magazines or newsletters, government magazines and publications

Networking – talking to friends, family, and other people you know

Visiting Employers / Informational Interviewing

Books – Nuala Beck, Frank Feathers, David Foot, and Faith Popcorn

Local Labour Market Information Centres

NETWORKING AND INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Another important and effective way to research is to talk to people. Briefly lecture the process and value of word of mouth and the necessity to 'go to the source' and to speak to employers and workers about their occupations. Distribute **Networking and Informational Interviewing Hand Out**. As time permits, have students complete the hand out activities.

WRAP UP – REVIEW OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Distribute Finding Out . . . How to Get the Information You Need to Make the Choices You Want, Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, as supplies permit. In closing, discuss community or school-based resources including, but not limited to, community directories, Family and Community Support Services, and the Chamber of Commerce.



GETTING THE GOODS ON LINE

Have students move to Internet stations independently, or in groups as space allows. Instruct students to go to alis.alberta.ca:

- **Occupational Profiles**
- **OCCinfo**

Select Occupational Profiles. Use the occupational title search.

Summarize the occupational information you find.

Occupation:

Education Required:

Employment Outlook:

Salary Range:

Duties (list at least 3 and give a brief explanation of each):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Skills, interests, values (list at least 3 characteristics of people who are successful at this work):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Other sources of information regarding this occupation (list at least 3):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Related occupations (list 3 that you might research for further information):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



NETWORKING AND INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Networking is talking to people you know about your goals, hopefully gathering information and links to other people. Some of the people who might be helpful are:

<i>Friends</i>	<i>Coworkers</i>	<i>Club / Team Members</i>
<i>Neighbours</i>	<i>Friends' Parents</i>	<i>Church Members</i>
<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Classmates</i>	<i>Volunteer Coordinators</i>
<i>Guidance Counsellors</i>	<i>Family and Relatives</i>	<i>Employers</i>

Make a list of the names of people who might be helpful:

Tell each of these people about your career ideas; ask them if they know anything about that occupation, or if they know anyone who might. You never know who might be helpful! Don't worry if people don't know right away, give them time to think and then get back to them. Keep track of your network and be persistent. Don't forget to thank your network for their efforts!

If your network is helpful, you just might land an **"informational interview"**. This is NOT a job interview. Informational interviews are a chance to speak with employers, workers or experts in an occupation and ask them questions about their work. They can provide valuable "insider" information that is very difficult to get in any other way. They also offer a chance to meet valuable contacts in an occupation. Here are some of the questions you might want to ask:

1. *What training or education is required for this work?*
2. *What are some of the pros or cons of this work?*
3. *What skills are necessary in this work?*
4. *Would you describe a typical day?*
5. *Is this career growing? What about the future?*
6. *How do computers affect this work?*
8. *Do you need any equipment or supplies for this work?*
9. *What is the starting wage in this work?*

What other questions can you think of?

Don't forget to send a thank-you card after an informational interview!